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Biden: Israel right to stop Gaza flotilla from breaking blockade

VP Biden tells Charlie Rose that the Israel Navy might not have needed to drop commandos onto the Gaza-bound ship, but insists that Israel is entitled to defend its security.

By [Natasha Mozgovaya](#) Tags: [Joe Biden](#) [Gaza flotilla](#)

U.S. Vice President Joe Biden on Wednesday defended Israel's blockade of the Gaza Strip and its decision to intercept the pro-Palestinian flotilla bringing humanitarian aid to the coastal territory, though he did not go so far as to defend the Israel Navy raid that killed nine people two days earlier.

In an interview with Charlie Rose, Biden pointed out that Israel had given pro-Palestinian activists the option of unloading their cargo at the Ashdod port, and offered to bring it to the Gaza Strip on their behalf.

"They've said, 'Here you go. You're in the Mediterranean. This ship -- if you divert slightly north you can unload it and we'll get the stuff into Gaza,'" he said. "So what's the big deal here? What's the big deal of insisting it go straight to Gaza? Well, it's legitimate for Israel to say, 'I don't know what's on that ship. These guys are dropping... 3,000 rockets on my people."

"Look, you can argue whether Israel should have dropped people onto that ship or not -- but the truth of the matter is, Israel has a right to know -- they're at war with Hamas -- has a right to know whether or not arms are being smuggled in."

During the interview, Biden also blamed Hamas for the crisis that has wracked the coastal territory and for the ongoing state of conflict with Israel.

"As we put pressure, and the world put pressure on Israel to let material go into Gaza to help those people who are suffering, the ordinary Palestinians there, what happened? Hamas would confiscate it, put it in a warehouse [and] sell it.

"So the problem is this would end tomorrow if Hamas agreed to form a government with the Palestinian Authority on the conditions the international community has set up," Biden told Rose.